

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-11 and 13-19 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 5, 6, 8 and 11 are independent.

Amendments have been made to the claims. Claim 12 has been cancelled and claims 11, 13, 14 and 16 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

II. Information Disclosure Citation

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed November 27, 2001, and for providing Applicant with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

III. Drawings

Applicant thanks the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on November 27, 2001.

IV. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Dokic et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

With regard to the rejection of claim 11, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of objected-to allowable claim 12, thereby automatically placing independent claim 11 into condition for allowance, along with dependent claims 13-19.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and allowance of claim 11, are respectfully requested.

V. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 1-10 are allowed, and that 12-19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. As set forth above, the limitations of objected-to claim 12 have been added into independent claim 11, and therefore independent claim 11 should be in condition for allowance. Also, claims 13-19 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 11, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 11 which is believed to be allowable.

VI. Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone

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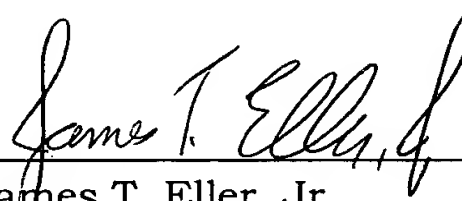
James T. Eller, Jr., Registration No. 39,538, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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